

## Opening Statement of Chairman McKeon

WASHINGTON— The House Armed Services Committee held a hearing today on [The Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of the Army](#). Chairman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon made the following opening statement as prepared for delivery:

*Witness testimony can be found on the [Committee Document Repository website](#) or linked below. All witness testimony is as prepared for, and embargoed until delivery.*

"Good morning. The committee meets today to receive testimony on the President's Fiscal Year 2014 budget request for the Department of the Army. I am pleased to welcome Secretary John McHugh and General Ray Odierno. It's great to see you both again and thank you for your continued service. Our nation is very fortunate to have you two leading our Army during these challenging times.

"I note that in your written testimony you state that 'America's Army is the best-trained, best-equipped and best-led fighting force in the world, providing a credible and capable instrument of national power.' I absolutely agree with you, but what we need your help with is understanding the risks associated with the Army's continued ability to meet the national security needs of this nation, and the critical assumptions behind these risks.

"For example, we hope to learn more about the Army's plans to reduce the size of its force. With last year's budget request, based on the Budget Control Act, the Army announced that it would reduce end-strength to 490,000 active duty soldiers, the minimum required to accomplish national security requirements. The draw-down would require the Army to go from 45 active duty Brigade Combat Teams (B-C-Ts) to 37. To date, of the 8 BCT's that will be deactivated, we have been told that 2 of the 8 will be Armor BCT's. We have also been told that the Army plans on adding a 3rd maneuver battalion to each active component Armor and Infantry BCT. It is our understanding that as a result of adding a 3rd maneuver battalion, the total number of active component BCTs will go to some number below 37 BCTs.

"However, it is a year later and we still do not know how many BCT's the Army plans on drawing-down to or where the Army will take the BCTs from. Equally important, we do not know what types of BCT's the Army thinks it needs. This includes Armor, Infantry, and Stryker BCT's. I know that we are in difficult times and that hard choices must be made. I hope that your testimony today will highlight areas of greatest risk and help this committee and others in Congress make the right choices. Again, thank you both for your continued service to our Nation. I look forward to your testimony."